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Sermon Notes

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## **A Cup of Cold Water for Christ's Messengers**

### **Matthew 10:40-42**

#### **I. Marching Orders Completed**

- A. Advancing Kingdom
- B. Harassed and Helpless Sheep
- C. Appointed Messengers

#### **II. Receiving Christ's Messengers and Believing Christ's Message**

**vs. 40** *"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me."*

Main Idea: There is a direct connection between receiving Christ's messengers and believing Christ's message. These messengers stand in His place to proclaim truth in His name, just as Christ stood in His Father's place to proclaim truth in His name. Warm reception of the messengers is the clearest indication of warm acceptance of their message. Rejection of the messengers is the same as rejection of the message, and of Him and His Father.

##### **A. Immediate Context: Waystations of Rest**

1. Scan Christ's instructions in Matthew 10
2. Empty-handed, trusting in God
3. Facing constant persecution, abuse, rejection... they are subject to arrest, imprisonment, trial, and fleeing for their lives
4. Needing refreshment along the way
5. "Receive" = takes in and provides hospitality

**vs. 11-13** *"Whatever town or village you enter, search for some worthy person there and stay at his house until you leave. 12 As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13 If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you.*

A big issue for these tired, weary, dusty, abused messengers of Christ

Illus. Pilgrim's Progress: Interpreters house, Gaius, Mnason... places of sweet refreshment along the toilsome journey of pilgrimage

Human side of ministry very much in view here... people willing to refresh these Apostles

**Psalm 23:1-3** *A psalm of David. The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. 2 He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, 3 he restores my soul.*

**3 John 5-8** *Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers, even though they are strangers to you. 6 They have told the church about your love. You will do well to send them on their way in a manner worthy of God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they went out, receiving no help from the pagans. 8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to such men so that we may work together for the truth.*

2. Christ provides for His own

- a. these messengers go out and stand in Christ's place, speaking Christ's words
- b. however they are treated is taken intensely personally by Christ

Said to Saul, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"... to someone who had been abusing the messengers of the gospel

- c. the persecutors are handled earlier

**vs. 14-15** *If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town. I tell you the truth, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.*

- d. here Christ promises rewards for any who take them in and care for them

BUT to any who will receive them, care for them, even give them a cup of cold water, there is an eternal reward

Exact same idea later in "sheep and goats" story

***Matthew 25:34-35 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'***

3. Why "Receiving an Apostle" is Reward-worthy

- a. guilt by association
- b. danger of suffering same treatment

Examples: Jason in Thessalonica

***Acts 17:5-9 But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.***

***Hebrews 10:32-34 Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering. 33 Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34 You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.***

Anyone who welcomed an Apostle of Christ risked the same treatment as the apostles got... this is why it was worthy of reward.

B. Larger Context: Receiving Christ's Message

1. Direct Connection Between Treatment of Messenger and Belief in Message

***vs. 14 If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that home or town.***

"You" + "your words"

***Luke 19:5-6 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.***

The glad welcome Zacchaeus gave Christ externally paralleled the glad welcome he gave Christ's word internally in his heart

2. Consistent issue in Paul's letters

***Galatians 4:14 Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself.***

***1 Thessalonians 1:9 for they themselves report what kind of reception you gave us. They tell how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God***

***1 Thessalonians 1:6 You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit.***

Note: 1) what kind of reception you gave US...2) you welcomed the MESSAGE

3. Clear example with the Philippian jailer

***Acts 16:29-34 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-- you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-- he and his whole family.***

The Philippian jailer "received" Paul and Barnabas in every way... 1) receiving the message with trembling faith; 2) receiving Paul and Barnabas into his home, washing their wounds, setting a meal before them!!

C. Apostolic Authority

1. Apostles sent out with Christ's authority... the exact same way Christ sent out with Father's authority

***Matthew 10:1 He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority***

Notice the "chain of command"

***vs. 40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.***

***John 20:21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you."***

2. To resist or oppose apostle was to resist or oppose Christ Himself

This is exactly why Paul makes so much of His apostleship...

***Galatians 1:1 Paul, an apostle-- sent not from men nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead--***

3. In effect the apostle stands in the place of God and represents him to the people

***2 Corinthians 5:20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.***

4. The treatment given by the people reflects their view of God Himself

***Exodus 16:8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."***

### III. The Body of Christ

Main Idea: There is a direct connection between Christ as the head and His messengers as His body. There is also an interconnection between one of Christ's messengers and anyone who helps him even in the smallest way. Not everyone is called to be an apostle, but assisting an apostle do His ministry is as valuable in God's sight as doing the apostolic ministry itself. This is in germ form the doctrine of the complex Body of Christ, with each having its own function, but all essential to the completion of the final mission.

- A. Christ's Connection to His People: Head and Body

***vs. 40 "He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me.***

***Ephesians 1:22-23 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.***

B. Diversity of Roles in the Body of Christ

***Romans 12:4-8 Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. 7 If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; 8 if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.***

***1 Corinthians 12:12 The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.***

***vs. 41 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward.***

C. Assist an Apostle = Preach as an Apostle

Basic concept: support ministries are as vital as "up-front" ministries! These apostles were sent out with no visible means of support. The Body of Christ is meant to support them. Imagine the apostles starving, or shivering out in the rain, or stumbling bloody barefoot through rock-strewn wastelands... all from lack of support

Thus, if you support a prophet because he is a prophet, you'll receive a prophet's reward... in God's sight one is not higher than the other!!

#### IV. The Comprehensive Rewards

***vs. 41-42 Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."***

Main Idea: Christ uses rewards to motivate His people to deeds of service. These deeds of service are essential to the advance of the Kingdom. The reward system is based whatever role one is called to by God, and will result in many surprises on Judgment Day. Even the slightest action of loving faithful service will never be forgotten. This helps break the potentially overwhelming world-wide Gospel mission into very achievable sub-goals and small actions. One could be rendered immobile by the prospect of bringing the gospel to a tribe living in darkness at the ends of the earth. But this “cup of cold water” teaching helps overcome that paralysis by faithfulness in small things. God is mighty enough to use even small things to accomplish His grand goal.

#### A. The “Cup of Cold Water” Properly Understood

1. Too often: “cup of cold water” refers to social ministry done for the needy
2. Concern for the poor an overwhelming Biblical doctrine
3. BUT here... the issue is helping other Christians do their work; this is strictly “family business”

Movement in Matthew 10 generally goes from Apostles immediate situation to persecuted disciples as a whole. So also movement in vss. 40-42 goes from Apostles to disciples generally

Cup of cold water is not just offered to apostles but to any disciple who needs it, in order to accomplish his/her ministry

#### B. The Doctrine of Christian Rewards

1. God will reward believers according to their deeds
  - a. rewards are certain: “will receive a reward”
  - b. rewards are secure and eternal: “will never lose his reward”
2. Consistent theme in New Testament
  - a. justification is NOT by good works... but the Christian life is to be saturated with good works

***Ephesians 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.***

God does not save us BY good works... He saves us FOR good works. And these good works are the very material He uses to build His Kingdom... whether the bold preaching of the Gospel by an Apostle, or the hot meal given to the Apostle by an anonymous servant afterwards

***Romans 2:6-7 God "will give to each person according to what he has done." To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.***

b. good works are anything done by the prompting of the Holy Spirit by faith

***John 15:4-5 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***

c. yearning for reward a BIG theme in the Bible

***Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

***Psalms 19:11 By them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward.***

***Psalms 62:12 ... that you, O Lord, are loving. Surely you will reward each person according to what he has done.***

***1 Samuel 26:23 The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness.***

3. Christ uses rewards as a major motivator: see Matthew 6

***Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.***

***Matthew 6:1 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.***

***Matthew 6:3-4 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.***

***Matthew 6:6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.***



***Matthew 6:17-18*** *But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

***Matthew 6:19-21*** *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Summary: Christ says be careful to do your acts of righteousness BY FAITH, secretly, so that you will not lose your reward!! Christ want you to store up as many good deeds as possible in heaven, not to pay for sin... but that they may be rewarded as a father rewards one who is already a son or daughter

3. Not sinful to yearn for rewards... it is COMMANDED

***Matthew 6:19-21*** *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

***Hebrews 11:6*** *And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

NOTE: Must believe that He exists... Must believe that He rewards those who seek Him

4. What is the reward?

***1 Corinthians 4:5*** *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

"Praise from God" = great reward... that God would be pleased with your actions, and that He would praise you for them... this is worth living for and dying for!!

***Matthew 25:21*** *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'*

"Come and share your master's happiness" = enter into the joy I live in... BUT here it is "Come and experience the joy I felt when you did this or that!!"

Jesus chided the Jews of His day for NOT seeking praise from God:

***John 5:44 How can you believe if you accept praise from one another, yet make no effort to obtain the praise that comes from the only God?***

I believe that our rewards are God's case-by-case praise of every good deed done by faith for His glory... each and every one will be praised by God

***Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."***

C. The Principle of Rewards: Comprehensive, Based on Motive and Faithfulness to Opportunity

1. Motive: Faith or Not

***Romans 14:23 everything that does not come from faith is sin.***

***Hebrews 11:4 By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings.***

***Hebrews 11:39 These were all commended for their faith***

***Hebrews 11:6 Without faith it is impossible to please God***

"Faith" is an absolute certainty of things you cannot see... of a God who is a King and is building a Kingdom... if you give even a cup of cold water to an apostle to help build Christ's Kingdom, you will never lose your reward

2. Manner: Loving or Not

***1 Corinthians 13:2-3 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.***

It is possible to do great things, even motivated by great faith, and have no reward because they were done in a surly, unloving manner

Imagine: being abused and opposed all day as an apostle, preaching the gospel to an unwilling town. That evening you stay at the home of a believer who feeds you and houses you out of faith that he will be rewarded... but does so in an rude manner

"I hope you realize how much this meal cost... but we are doing it for free because of Christ"

3. Opportunity: Faithful or Not

***Galatians 6:10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.***

***2 Corinthians 8:12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what he does not have.***

4. Reward is Comprehensive: Small or Great, Everything is Noticed

***Matthew 10:42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."***

***NAS Luke 16:10 "He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.***

D. Comprehensive Motivation: Smallest Action, Greatest Consequences

1. Christ: Marvelous Motivator

- a. a psychology to actions
- b. possibility of overwhelming discouragement
- c. Christ a perfect motivator... "Cup of cold water" approach enables us to get off the mark and start acting for God TODAY!!! Even slightest actions will be rewarded

2. The Daunting Apostolic Task

- a. disciples are only human
- b. facing an infinite journey can render us paralyzed with the immensity of the task

Illus. "Feeding of the 5000"...Jesus turned to His disciples and said "They don't need to go away, you give them something to eat!!"

This task is even bigger... Jesus is turning to His disciples and saying "They don't need to go to hell... you give them the gospel!!" To the very ends of the earth, until every tribe, language, people and nation has heard

Crushed by the immensity of the task, the weak disciples might never have begun

Jesus took the task and broke it into small, bite-sized pieces... "a cup of cold water"

3. Rejoicing in the "Day of Small Things"

***Zechariah 4:10 "Who despises the day of small things?"***

***Matthew 13:31 "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.***

***Matthew 13:33 "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough."***

God is able to use even the smallest act of service to Him... even as insignificant as the giving of a cup of cold water to sustain a disciple

4. Step by Step, the Worldwide Kingdom is Built

This is the way God built the entire physical universe

Atom connects to atom, making molecules

Molecules combine with molecules making complex compounds

Compounds combine with other compounds making cells

Cells join with other cells, making organs

All woven together to make all things in the universe... from tiny atoms we get massive stars and complex human brains

God does not despise small things... neither should we

## V. Application

1. Go Fearlessly: "God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply"
2. Proclaim Boldly: We are ambassadors with His authority
3. Serve One Another Comprehensively: We are one Body with one common goal... and even the slightest actions have eternal consequences

### Do Not Despise Small Things

Illus. Next week... Pinedale Christian Church in Winston-Salem... Missions handbook; from 50 cents for an Indian New Testament to \$100,000 to build an orphanage

4. Do All Expectantly: "God is not unjust"... He will reward

***Hebrews 6:10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.***